

Business

Hamilton is New Zealand's leading centre for the research, development and commercialisation of ag-bio, agri-technologies. A host of internationally competitive food manufacturing and engineering companies are clustered in Hamilton and provide 90% of the region's employment.

The District Plan review is designed to actively support the aspirations of Hamilton's Economic Development Strategy:

- > A vibrant Hamilton.
- > A thriving business environment.
- > Building on economic strengths.

Central city vibrancy

The central city is the heart and hub of our community. Council's strategies include aspirations focussed on the continued vitality of the central city.

A more vibrant and prosperous central city can better contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of people that live in the city and the region. Council has made significant public investment in the form of central city infrastructure and public facilities to promote its vitality.

A strong and attractive centre can help ensure that adverse effects, such as traffic congestion, are reduced by providing a central location which can be efficiently serviced with public transport, walking and cycling networks.

Outcome

The central city is the vibrant heart of the city and wider region. This means we want people to enjoy visiting, working or studying in the central city and we want it to be busy. Council has spent 150 years investing in infrastructure and the use of this investment should be maximised.

The plan response

The District Plan can assist in delivering our aspirations by ensuring that future developments are well designed and increase existing opportunities for employment, education, commerce and social identity. New investment in the central city can also be encouraged.

Option 1

Retain the current approach of the District Plan where a structure plan for the central city shows design controls like set backs of buildings and controls on verandahs.

Option 2

Update the central city structure plan to reflect the City Heart revitalisation projects and identify specific themed precincts, such as an entertainment precinct around Hood Street.

Option 3

Divide the central city into specific zones to create a mini District Plan for each area.

What we are thinking so far

Both Options 1 and 2 are good approaches.

Combining them would enable specific approaches to be taken to different parts of the central city. This enables the character of different areas of the central city to be recognised and managed. It also allows some flexibility in design, while at the same time providing more clarity on what kind of development is appropriate. It may also help to address reverse sensitivity issues because people would be aware of the dominant character of each precinct. A structure plan incorporating a precinct approach allows the positive aspects of each part of the central city to be built on.

Option 3, dividing the central city and creating a mini District Plan for each zone, would only serve to add an extra level of unnecessary complexity.

Centres

Centres provide a focal point for shops, offices and entertainment, and a home for civic, cultural and community facilities. They offer convenience by enabling

people to undertake a number of activities during the same trip, which reduces traffic effects and better utilises existing roads, footpaths and cycle lanes.

Locating key activities away from centres creates problems because it results in a dispersed pattern of business that creates demand for infrastructure. It also reduces the vibrancy and sustainability of our centres and makes it difficult to service them with public transport. Dispersing activities means over time people will have to travel further to access goods and services. This can undermine people's quality of life – particularly those without ready access to cars, such as the young and the elderly.

Outcome

To locate shops and services in centres which are an appropriate size for the scale of the activity. This means that an activity that serves people all over the city should locate in the central city. An activity that serves a neighbourhood, like a dairy, should locate in the centre of that neighbourhood.

The plan response

Currently, the District Plan does not have a clear policy on the development of centres. It allows the market to decide whether new shops and services should locate in an existing centre, or somewhere else.

Option 1

The current approach of the District Plan, which allows the market to dictate the role of centres and what activities locate where.

Option 2

Define a hierarchy (categories) of centres and require development to locate in the most appropriate centre for its size.



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Option 3

Allow development to locate on transit corridors (along roads) outside of centres.

What we are thinking so far

That Option 2 would best achieve the desired outcomes. There is already a hierarchy of centres in Hamilton that we could put into the District Plan. This hierarchy is:

- > Regional centre – the central city
- > Sub Regional centres – the Base and Westfield Chartwell
- > Suburban centres – centres that serve just one or two neighbourhoods (e.g. Hillcrest shopping centre)
- > Neighbourhood centres – centres that serve just one neighbourhood (e.g. Bryant Park)
- > Local centres – centres that serve just the people around them (e.g. Bankwood Road Superette).

Option 2 gives convenience to the community, offers opportunities to minimise private vehicle use and its associated effects, creates more vibrant places where people want to be and maximises returns on investment in infrastructure, including public transport.

It is acknowledged that although it reduces location flexibility, Option 2 offers the most benefits to the community overall.

Allowing the market to further determine business/development location can result in a dispersed pattern which will not have and will further weaken the CBD. The result could be a city that is dispersed and difficult to service with public transport.

Industrial and commercial

Hamilton's industrial land accommodates a wide range of commerce and industries. These include:

- > Service industries (e.g. mechanics, machinery servicing)
- > Commercial developments (e.g. offices, professional services and hospitality)
- > Vehicle, plant and machinery servicing
- > Trade retail (e.g. trade supply stores)
- > Storage and distribution warehouses
- > Manufacturing
- > Transport depots.

Industrial land needs to be used primarily for industrial purposes, but each of these industrial sectors has different needs and has a different effect on the surrounding area. For example, a mechanic has different needs compared to a concrete manufacturing plant or trade retail store. These differences need to be recognised and controlled, particularly where an industrial zone is next to or near residential areas. Similarly, workers in industrial areas should enjoy environments that cater for their social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Find out more

To tell us what you think or for more in the series of Fast Forward Factsheets visit www.fastforwardhamilton.co.nz

The period for public comments closes on 29 October 2010.



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